

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, April 8, 2002**

Present: Colleen Craig, Glen Dey, Janet Miller, M.S. Mitchell, *Trix Niernberger, Joe Todd

Absent: June Bailey

Also Present: Chris Steincamp, Bob Harbison, Devin Hanson and Mike Greene – Wichita Festivals, Inc. (WFI); Dan Wilson, John Brewer and Chris Harder – Wilson-Darnell-Mann PA; Sue Schlapp – Wichita Racquet Club; Greg and Debra Ferris; Kathy Dittmer and Lucy Burnett – Riverside Citizens Association (RCA); Mike North – Law Department; Ed Martin – Public Works; and Doug Kupper, Walt Bratton, Leah Hoffman and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 11, 2002, were reviewed and approved.

1. **Discussion of proposed Wichita Festivals, Inc. Ordinance.** Steincamp gave a brief background of WFI stating that the River Festival was a showcase event for the City of Wichita. He said the Festival's economic impact to the City was around \$20 Million a year and that it was the biggest positive cash flow to the City from a public event. He commented that WFI received no public funding, that the entire event was funded through sponsorships, private donations and gifts, and the sale of the \$3 festival buttons, which normally provided about 25% of the cost of the event. He added that the WFI board, consisting of all volunteers, devoted an enormous amount of time to supporting the City and the River Festival.

Steincamp referred to financial information that was provided at the March meeting, stating that button sales have continued to decline over the years and that WFI would like to have the ability to charge admission to selected events that cost WFI additional funds. An example he gave was the headliner concert featuring Huey Lewis and the News. He added that WFI was currently planning several other festivals and events that would showcase other areas of the City. He said allowing WFI to charge admission would provide additional funding that would allow WFI to continue to expand. He added that the last several years WFI has not made a profit on the River Festival.

*Trix Niernberger present.

Steincamp referred board members to three ordinance proposals prepared by the Law Department. He said the first proposal was WFI's proposed ordinance change presented to the Board at the last meeting. He said that was the broadest interpretation of WFI's request

to charge admission because they wanted to limit the number of times they had to come back to the Park Board to ask for permission to conduct various activities. He said Options A and B were drafted as a result of board member's comments at the March meeting. He said Option A limited charging admission to one specific site, say South Riverside Park, during River Festival. He said that proposal was acceptable to WFI in the short term; however, that it would limit WFI's flexibility and ability to conduct additional festivals and events. He said Option B limited charging admission to one specific event during River Festival. He commented that WFI had commitments to event sponsors and that they felt this option would limit their ability to attract sponsors. He said WFI did not feel Option B was a viable option.

North clarified that these were not the only options or alternatives available for board consideration. He stated that there were a number of combinations and/or other alternatives that were possible, that the three proposals presented were just a starting point for discussion. He commented that after reviewing the minutes of the March Park Board, the City Council had requested that the board reconsider the item again and give them a recommendation.

Harbison explained that WFI understood that the headliner concert would have to be held in a large, privately owned facility such as Lawrence Dumont or Cessna Stadium. He said WFI was launching a promotional campaign to promote and advertise the significance and pride of wearing a button. He said they would like to require that a button be worn for admission to the smaller concerts held at South Riverside Park. Mitchell commented that none of the proposed ordinances stated that. Miller commented that at the March meeting, the Board understood WFI to say that in the future they would be looking for other venues besides Lawrence Dumont and Cessna Stadium to provide the headliner concert and that South Riverside might be one of them. It was the general consensus that there seemed to be confusion concerning WFI's request.

Steincamp commented that if the ordinance were written more generally it would be more flexible as the river corridor developed. He did clarify that WFI would like to charge an admission fee in addition to the requirement for a button to enter events. There was discussion concerning whether requiring participants to wear a button was in reality charging an admission fee. Miller commented that none of the ordinances presented mentioned requiring a button and/or an admission fee.

Niernberger commented that in her personal opinion she did not object to requiring a button for event admission. However, she said it was another thing to give WFI "carte blanche" to charge to events conducted in City parks. She said she realized there were expenses associated with providing major events, but she commented that the City's expenses increased also. She concluded by saying that allowing WFI to charge to events on parkland would be a change in policy.

There was discussion regarding the legal language used in the proposed ordinances and the difference between charging admission and requesting that someone pay for a button to attend an event. Harbison clarified that the Wichita Park System did not have a facility that was large enough to hold a major concert.

Mitchell suggested that the board recommend limiting charging admission to a single site and try it for one year. Steincamp said he thought WFI could work with the single site concept; however, they preferred the broadest interpretation of the ordinance.

Miller commented that she agreed that River Festival had a tremendous economic impact on the community and that it was a great event for the City; however, she wanted it noted that WFI does receive support from the City. Staincamp clarified that WFI does receive in-kind services from both the City and County, but that he was just speaking in terms of cash or funding. Niernberger agreed that the City and Park Department should be recognized for their efforts to make the River Festival a success.

Miller expressed concern that if requiring a button or charging admission were allowed, the entire nature of the River Festival would change and that it would no longer be a public event. She added that no other groups were allowed to charge and that if other groups did not receive enough underwriting or sponsorships, they would be allowed to charge to events in South Riverside.

Director Kupper reminded board members of the type and quality of the events that WFI brings to the City such as the BBQ Cookoff and Chili Cookoff. Mitchell commented that he did not feel it was a "waste of time" for WFI to come back to the Park Board on each event. He said he felt the board would be able to accommodate any WFI request, but was not prepared to give that entire responsibility to WFI.

On motion by Mitchell, second by Niernberger, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the board recommend that City and WFI attorneys work to draft an ordinance that would approve the use of a single site for the 2002 River Festival and that a current River Festival button would be required as the price of admission.

2. **Discussion of Indoor Tennis Center.** Dan Wilson from Wilson-Darnell-Mann introduced members of the tennis center design team John Brewer, Project Manager and Chris Harder, Technical Advisor. He also recognized the assistance of Sue Schlapp from the Wichita Racquet Club in the effort to locate an indoor tennis facility in the downtown area.

Wilson gave a Power Point presentation on the site plan and design concepts for the proposed indoor tennis center at Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Facility. He said the building was a massive enclosure housing 6 tennis courts as well as equipment storage areas between the courts. The presentation provided views of the completed complex from various locations including the entrance from West Central, the bridge at Seneca and Central, and East and West Stackman Drive. He reviewed the entry drive, concession area and second floor overlook, which he said had a view of both the outdoor and indoor court areas. He commented that a portion of the parking area and 4 of the older courts that had not yet been rehabilitated would be taken to make room for the facility, in addition to the removal of several trees. He added, however, that there would be minimal impact to the landscape.

Wilson indicated that because Wilson-Darnell-Mann PA had been selected to design renovation of the Riverside Park System, they would be able to incorporate appropriate building materials that would blend with the entire park theme. Responding to several

questions, Wilson indicated that the building was approximately 60,000 square feet with an estimated price tag of \$5.6 million dollars. He commented that they have not been given a project budget, but that they could phase in court construction depending upon available funding.

Greg Ferris gave a brief background stating that the project started 3 to 4 years ago. He commented that the Wilson-Darnell-Mann proposal could almost be done in phases. Sue Schlapp commented that at the beginning of the project, a survey was conducted concerning development of a first class tennis facility that would be open year-round. She said private facilities can't meet the needs of the public and serve the needs of the community like a public facility can. She gave several examples such as programs with USD #259 and individuals who are physically challenged. Debra Ferris stated that her children take tennis lessons and play 3 or 4 times a week at a private facility that costs approximately \$30 each visit, in addition to the membership fee. She commented on the economic feasibility of a year-round tennis facility and also mentioned the entrance feature that would provide security.

Mitchell said he did not know how the discussion about moving the tennis facility got started but that he was against development of the complex at another location. He referred board members to the minutes of the Design Council dated March 21, 2002. Director Kupper clarified that the motion was a recommendation. There was brief discussion concerning the Design Council and its function. Director Kupper explained that they look at project aesthetics. Sue Schlapp clarified that the community supported the Riverside location.

Responding to a question, Director Kupper indicated that money was allocated in the 2003 Capital Improvement Program budget for development of the complex. He said he understood that development of the complex would be a public/private partnership in addition to applying for grants and other foundation funding. Miller asked if the Park Department would receive additional funding for operational costs associated with the facility? There was discussion concerning development of a contract for a tennis professional to run the facility, similar to the contracts with the golf professionals. Ed Martin, Public Works project manager, clarified that a single person could operate the facility from the control desk on the second floor.

Niernerberger asked about neighborhood input on the proposed facility. Kathy Dittmer, President, Riverside Citizens Association (RCA), commented that the expansion plans had not been presented to the entire RCA; however, she said a facility of this caliber could only benefit the neighborhood.

On motion by Miller, second by Todd, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to reaffirm the Park Board's previous action to support the project to build the indoor tennis complex at the Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Facility.

3. **Discussion of Adopt-A-Park Program.** Director Kupper reported that staff had presented the Adopt-A-Park Program to the six District Advisory Boards (DAB) for their input. He briefly reviewed comments provided by the DAB's including the length of the contract (the majority of them thought 3 years was too long of a commitment), making the contract more

“user friendly” and less threatening, better clarification on training required for certain tasks in addition to several suggestions on changing the contract format. He commented that anything was negotiable. Responding to a question, he assured board members that this would in no way “replace” park maintenance because the Park and Recreation Department was ultimately responsible if adoptees did not fulfill their commitment. He said the program was designed to help the department allocate its resources more efficiently with the assistance of neighborhood groups and homeowners associations. He commented that staff has received several inquiries already on how to become part of the program. He added that medians were also included in the program and mentioned work being done in west Wichita.

Miller mentioned that she felt there might have been a lack of communication to the various neighborhood groups. She suggested that in the future a cover letter explaining the program be sent with any program communication.

On motion by Dey, second by Miller, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend that the City Council approve the Adopt-A-Park Program.

4. **Director’s Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following items:

- Oak Park Well – He said since the pump dated back to the 1940’s, staff was unable to locate replacement parts. However, they have located a pump that will fit into the casing. He commented that it should be installed by the end of the week and that it had a capacity to pump 200 gallons of water per minute.
- Adult Soccer Fields – He said staff was proceeding to develop the Bridgeport site with two fields; that no alternative site had been proposed.
- Riverside Park System Master Plan – At this time, 70% of the design drawings are complete; however, he does not believe construction on the project will begin before January, 2003 due to bids and contract turnaround time. He added that the City Council had approved the 2004 CIP for the project.
- Sisters of St. Joseph proposal - He reported that St. Joseph was developing a legal description for the requested parcel, but that some issues had been raised regarding development of the lake. Craig reported that she attended a meeting where surrounding neighbors expressed concern about flooding in the area.
- Herman Hill Environmental Demonstration Project – He reported that funds were in place and that the water recovery project was moving forward as planned.
- Fairmount Park Shelter – He reported that the contractor should be done in early July.
- South Linwood Park School Site – He reported that the condemnation process has begun for the 4.6 acres.
- Summer of Discovery – He reported that the SOD program was proceeding as planned. He added that “early bird registration” (contacting clientele from last year) started in April.
- Grove Park Project - He reported that staff was proceeding to stake out the new football field. He said they were also negotiating with the engineering firm to stockpile the topsoil on site for future use. He said soil testing and field samples were also being

taken. He added that staff would be meeting with the neighborhood association to talk about aesthetic improvements along Hillside.

- Extended Pool Hours – He reported that College Hill and Country Acres would have extended hours this summer. He added that extended hours had not been successful at McAdams.
- Job Fair – He said the department has held a job fair each month since February and that they had been very successful resulting in numerous applications for summer employment. He commented that the length of processing to actually get people at work was still an issue. Niernberger asked about applicant diversity.
- Alcohol Tax Money – He commented that the alcohol tax money that comes to the City is split 3-ways, with park and recreation receiving between \$1.1 and \$1.3 million.

5. **Other Items:**

- Skate Park Proposal – Niernberger inquired if Mr. Hopp had been invited to the next skate park meeting. Director Kupper said staff had contacted a skate park designer for suggestions as to what can be done with the proposed location.
- Downtown Arena – Dey asked if the proposed downtown arena would affect Century II events. Director Kupper indicated that it may, depending on the type and number of venues it attracts. He commented that it was very costly to operate that kind of facility.
- Riverside Park Rocket – There was discussion concerning the instability of the rocket in Riverside Park and that continued use of it was a safety issue. Lucy Burtnett requested that the rocket be kept in Riverside as a piece of sculpture.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:35 p.m.

M.S. Mitchell, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary